

Oaklands
25th Jan (assumed 1948)

My dear G,

I am sending you this purposely at the week end so that you can consider it quickly on Sunday and not have your work interrupted.

Firstly

We hope that work is going well and that you are really making progress. Do you now feel that, if given the best help obtainable in the vacation, you can face end of your exams with confidence? In this connection please do not hesitate for a moment to let me pay for the best help available in the vac. I can advertise for it if necessary.

Secondly

Is there more practical work in the third year? Assuming 2nd year exams are passed, is the 3rd year syllabus likely to prove too theoretical? ????? will help us if you pass the second year exams.

Thirdly

The best of all to get qualified is for you to go on and get a degree. If, however, you feel the theoretical grind is too much then it is form to consider alternatives.

Fourthly

I advertised in "The Times" to see if there were any takers. I got one reply from the Atlas Engineering Co. I sent him further details and haven't heard again! Meanwhile I made enquiries about the Atlas Eng Co thro' William Farren and also a friend of mine, a chartered accountant in London, a shrewd Scot.

The former has replied, but we are not convinced they are good enough. Anyhow I haven't heard again.

Next we have advert A to which I replied and haven't heard any more.

B is a cutting from the newspaper. I think it must be put in by Atlas.

C may interest you.

D won't

E is worth reading carefully

F You are really qualified except for age. This might be waived.

G You are fully qualified for this and would in fact get preference, being under 25.

Fifthly

William Farren has gone to considerable trouble to make enquiries. A vacancy at Loughborough is not likely, but cannot be entirely ruled out yet. He has written, however, to say that a man who is Head of the part of his organisation dealing with the testing of aeroplanes nr Manchester, or rather Woodford, near Manchester might subject to interview, offer you a job. It is a line which could lead to an interesting career "if you put your back into it".

William Farren goes on ". . . He now says that he would be perfectly ready to have a talk with George, and providing he likes him, and feels that he would work really hard, and also take a real interest in the theoretical background of the work

(including evening studies at Manchester or elsewhere) he would be prepared to take him on at . . . about £350.

This would rise by £40 a year until the age of 26 (in G's case) which would mean about £430 after which it would depend on how he shaped.

The job

The work is described as "Instrumentation". When we test aeroplanes in flight we have to get a vast amount of information about what is going on in them. They are very complicated, and this can only be done by fitting them up with a lot of special equipment, from the readings of which you can tell what everything is doing or, to be honest, you can so long as it works. Since flying aeroplanes is a very expensive business, it pays us to take a great deal of care about this, and we have a number of people who make a speciality of the job. It is pleasant and interesting work, mostly messing about with ingenious devices of all kinds, and when you can't find exactly what you want, you have to devise one or make it.

This kind of thing runs through the whole of aviation, but, more important from the point of view of a career, it runs through the whole of engineering, for instance it is used in ships, locomotives, road transport, bridges and so on.

I think George would be interested in this, chiefly because it is something which does demand a lot of skill in practical work, gives plenty of opportunity for ingenuity and originality, and does not make a heavy demand on the higher flights of theory. Of course you have to understand why the things work, which is why he would have to satisfy the theoretical side. But from what he said to me I think he would not find this difficult, because it would be directly connected with the work itself.

In addition it is not a sort of mass production activity in a factory where lots of other people are doing just the same thing. It is the sort of job where enterprise and initiative can really find a part . . . it would not mean spending all his life flying. Most of the work is done on the ground. But it means being in and out of aeroplanes the whole time, and there is plenty of opportunity to fly, since at any rate with the big aeroplanes, someone from the Instrumentation group always goes up to look after things."

(I am replying to W Farren and saying that we will let him know in about a fortnight.)

I should not, if I was you, be precipitate. Think things over on Sunday, the Sunday following, and write me a letter in about a week's time.

Generally speaking a man can do what he is fully determined to do, but in the course of a career there must be interest as well as determination.

Well – Is this enough?

All the best and love from us both.

Dad/Cyril